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AN ESSAY

ON

THE PLACE OF ECCLESIASTICUS IN SEMITIC LITERATURE

BEING

The Inaugural Lecture

DELIVERED BY

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THE PLACE OF ECCLESIASTICUS IN SEMITIC LITERATURE.

AMONG the many merits of Dr. Hatch's *Studies in Biblical Greek*, not the least consists in his having called attention to the interesting problems connected with the text of Ecclesiasticus, a field into which he invites collaborateurs. Those problems are indeed peculiarly interesting. We have two independent versions in Syriac and in Greek, each made from a Semitic original; and the Greek version exists in several different recensions, embodying progressive revisions by persons who had the original before them; and there is a third version in Latin, in a remarkable dialect, really a farrago of several versions, one of which gives independent testimony concerning the original, whether directly or indirectly obtained. Besides these versions there are many quotations and reminiscences in the Rabbinical literature, which, if they make little claim to accuracy, give help and guidance in estimating the other evidence. Now if the translators had done their work well, we should have known exactly what Ben-Sira meant, but have had no clue to what he wrote. As the case stands, they have done their work so badly, notably the Syrian translator, that there are few verses in which some scrap of the original does not appear through the versions; for it is rare that more than one Hebrew word can be represented in the same two ways, although the imperfection of the Semitic writing leads to greater ambiguities than would be possible in a Western document.

These materials have never been systematically employed, but still wait for a critic, although Ben-Sira has more than once been translated into Hebrew. Indeed, the latest writer on the subject still maintains the untenable view that the Syriac is not independent, but made from the Greek, a supposition which would deprive us of the better half of our critical material. However, the arguments by which the dependence of the Syriac version has been upheld, whether by the older critics excerpted in Schleussner's *Lexicon to the Septuagint*, or by Bretschneider, or by Fritzsche, or by later writers still, are one and all too weak to have any influence on the question; while its independence can be proved by evidence which is overwhelming, and which any one who knows how to study those versions will find constantly increase. It is surprising that among students armed with a reasonably competent knowledge of Hebrew, Syriac, and Greek, there have ever been two opinions on this subject; and we have in favour of the independence-theory the united vote of two scholars of the very highest competence, who rarely speak without careful consideration, and are not always agreed, Professors Nöldeke and Lagarde. The case of the Latin version¹ is much more difficult, because here a general opinion cannot be passed on the whole, or even any chapter of it, but each verse has to be referred separately to its source. And the agreement of the MSS. of which collations have hitherto been published is so singular, that one might almost hazard the hypothesis that the original translator had submitted

¹ The importance of the Latin version was first seen by Bengel (in Eichhorn's *Bibl. Or.* vii. 481), who, however, did not pursue the study of it very far. A very striking passage is in ix. 7 *μη περιβλέπου ἐν ῥύμαις πόλεως καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἐρήμοις αὐτῆς μη πλαῶν*, Lat. *nec oberraveris in plateis eius*, evidently reading *בְּרִחוֹתֶיהָ בְּרִחוֹתֶיהָ*, and rightly; see Aboth, ed. Schechter, p. 10. It is noticeable that the Greek Ephraem (i. 83 c) quotes the verse with this reading: *μηδὲ ἀποπλανῶ ἐν ταῖς πλατείαις αὐτῆς*. The same confusion is to be found in xlix. 6, where the Greek has *τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτῆς*, the Syr. *DESERTA EIUS*. The Syr. of ix. 7 is either corrupt, or represents a reading *בְּרִחוֹתֶיהָ*. In a large number of places the Latin either agrees with the Syriac against the Greek, or else exhibits a conflation of the two renderings. The most remarkable additions are to be found in chaps. i and xxiv.—In this essay the Syriac version will, wherever possible, be represented by Latin in small capitals; while the Greek will be quoted according to the best attested readings.

his work first, to a better Latinist than himself, to correct his diction, then to a person possessed of another recension of the Greek, then to one possessed of the Hebrew; and had allowed his book to be published containing his friends' additions and corrections side by side with his original copy. Without asserting that such was really the history of the *Vetus Latina*, we may regard this hypothesis as giving a tolerably accurate description of that version as we have it. It contains much that is of the highest value, and is preserved in no other source; still more that is useless and argues a crass ignorance of Greek on the part of the translator; and it has suffered badly at the hands of unintelligent copyists. When therefore the primary versions are spoken of, only the Greek and the Syriac have a right to that title; the Latin stands midway between a primary and a secondary version; the other versions, the Armenian, Aethiopic, Sahidic, and Syro-hexaplaris of the Greek, with the Arabic of the Syriac, all contribute their mites, though it is remarkable that the best preserved contributes the least; but the basis of any contemplated restoration of Ben-Sira's proverbs must be the comparison of the Greek with the Syriac version.

This subject, the relation of the versions to the original of *Ecclesiasticus*, was discussed by the present writer in a dissertation to which the Kennicott Prize was assigned in 1887 by three very eminent Hebraists, all Professors in this University, and all of them persons who have laid the writer under great obligations; and all advised him to publish his results as soon as he conveniently could. He did not do that, because he felt that there was some secret about *Ecclesiasticus* which had not yet been explained. For although he had collected between two and three hundred examples of differences between the Greek and Syriac versions which were explicable by the assumption of Hebrew words misunderstood, this was no very large portion of fifty-one chapters; and the number of unexplained passages which remained seemed to indicate a flaw in the method. He therefore went through the versions once more, collecting a further spicilegium of good readings, and probable explanations of differences, without however making much real progress. It was only after he had set to work to translate the book verse by verse into Hebrew that what seems to him to be the real key revealed itself; and this with some other observations which

occurred to him, seemed of sufficient interest to be worth communicating in an Inaugural Lecture¹.

My lamented colleague, Dr. Edersheim, and I, misled by the very late date assigned by eminent scholars to the books of the Bible, had worked under the tacit assumption that the language of Ben-Sira was the language of the Prophets; whereas in reality he wrote the language of the Rabbis. Some early authorities, I now find, state that Ben-Sira 'wrote in the Syriac or vulgar Hebrew of his time,' arguing perhaps from some of the quotations in Rabbinical literature noticed above; and this statement, if limited to 'vulgar Hebrew,' or what may be called New-Hebrew (which should not be confused with Syriac), is accurate. I had indeed noticed in Dr. Schechter's *Aboth* a certain number of phrases which seemed to throw light on passages in the Greek of Ben-Sira, as, for example, some in which *διαθήκη* is used in a difficult sense; 'remember that the *covenant* of Hell is not showed thee' (xiv. 12); 'the *covenant* from the beginning is, thou shalt die the death' (xiv. 17); 'who shall relate works of piety? or who shall endure? for the *covenant* is far off' (xvi. 22). In all these passages *διαθήκη* may well represent *מִן*, a New-Hebrew word signifying 'the appointed time' of death, sufficiently well rendered by *διαθήκη* in the sense of 'disposition,' but not in that of 'covenant;' for *this* *διαθήκη* is settled by one party only. (In the first of these passages the Syriac version confirms this restoration; in the second it almost confirms it; in the third it fails.) I was not, however, prepared to find that Ben-Sira's vocabulary was practically the vocabulary of *Aboth*—only enriched with many dialectic words for which we should search the Rabbinic literature in vain.

One other observation, also, this new study brought;—not, as it turns out, a new observation, yet one of which little or no use has hitherto been made. The stichometry of the book had suggested to some older scholars that Ben-Sira wrote in *metre*, and this suggestion has now amply justified itself. Without presuming to judge Dr. Bickell's doctrine of Biblical metres,—in which the best scholars allow that there is some

¹ The Laudian Professor has to lecture in 'Arabic, Chaldee, and Syriac;' the present subject perhaps combines the three as well as any could.

truth,—one may hold that, if the Psalms are metrical, the metres are such as do not force themselves on the ear, and perhaps can only be felt to the detriment of the poetry. Moreover, the number of licences which Dr. Bickell admits, and his arbitrary rejection of the Masoretic tradition, have exposed his method to grave objections. Far otherwise is the case with Ben-Sira, who seems to write trimeters and tetrameters with a regularity which scarcely falls behind that of the Greek and Sanskrit poets. The *foot* or unit of which they consist is a trisyllable, of which the middle syllable is invariably long; the other two are common, although in most lines one or more of these syllabae ancipites are regularly short. By ‘short’ syllable I mean the vocal sh’wa, all vowels being by the grammatical rule long, or else in closed syllables. The variation between trimeters and tetrameters—for pentameters seem very rarely employed—perhaps corresponds with the mood of the writer; the tetrameter being employed in passages of greater earnestness and solemnity than would suit the lighter trimeter. The same variation is noticeable in some Indian philosophical poems, such as the Bhagavadgītā, where the ordinary rhythm is the śloka, but a longer verse is introduced where the poet’s thoughts are too vehement to be compressed within the compass of the former metre. In the classical languages this metre would be called Bacchic, and much the same licences are admitted as in the Bacchics of Plautus. In Arabic it is called ‘Mutaqârib,’ the ‘tripping,’ and is a very favourite rhythm; there is a poem in it of twenty couplets, addressed by the great poet Mutanabbi to his patron Badr, scarcely to be surpassed for beauty of thought and elegance of diction. The Arabic metre, owing to the clear distinction in that language between short and long vowels, is as superior in regularity to the Hebrew as the Greek is to the Old Latin. The syllaba anceps is confined to the second arsis, whereas the first arsis is always short. On the other hand, the last arsis of the hemistich can be optionally omitted in Arabic, a licence which in the Hebrew appears to be confined to the first arsis or anacrusis of the first hemistich. Like most of the Arabic metres, the Hebrew metre is antithetical, and a faulty or inadequate antithesis is a sure sign of a corruption or mistranslation.

The inductions by which these results have been reached would require more words than could be compressed into the time allotted me,

and shall be reserved for the restoration of Ben-Sira, which I hope may be completed before very long. It will there be seen how very trivial were the corruptions of all the Hebrew copies for the most part; how much havoc was wrought by the change of a ד with a ר, a ו with a י, and a ב with a ג, or the occasional transposition of letters; how often the first Greek translator, who was fairly well skilled in New-Hebrew, has given a word its New-Hebrew sense when the Old-Hebrew was required; how constantly the Syrian translator errs in the contrary way, though even he sometimes applies his knowledge of New-Hebrew on inappropriate occasions. It will be seen how strongly the metrical doctrine is supported by the evident padding in the Hebrew—for padding is not disapproved of by the Orientals as it is by us, but is regarded by both Indians and Arabs as almost legitimate. The same metrical doctrine will account for the wealth of vocables called into service, and for variations even in common words between the Old-Hebrew and the Aramaic idioms, which would otherwise be difficult to explain. For the present I will offer two short specimens of my restoration of Ben-Sira, with brief notes upon them; and will then proceed to explain my method a little more fully, and to draw what I believe to be the right inferences from the phenomena under consideration.

SPECIMEN I. CHAP. XII. 8, ETC.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 8. οὐκ ἐκδικηθήσεται ἐν ἀγαθοῖς ὁ φίλος | לא יִדְרֹשׁ רַע בְּטוֹבוֹת |
| NON DOCTUS FIT IN BONIS SUIS AMICUS | |
| καὶ οὐ κρυβήσεται ἐν κακοῖς ὁ ἐχθρός | וְצַר בְּרָעוֹת לֹא יִסְתָּר |
| NEQUE CELABITUR IN MALIS SUIS INIMICUS | |
| 9. ἐν ἀγαθοῖς ἀνδρὸς οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτοῦ ἐν λύπῃ | בְּטוֹבוֹת אִישׁ צָרָיו בְּצָרָו |
| IN BONIS VIRI INIMICI EIUS IN DOLORE SUNT | |
| καὶ ἐν τοῖς κακοῖς καὶ ὁ φίλος διαχωρισθήσεται | בְּרָעוֹת הָרַע יִפָּרֵד |
| ET IN MALIS EIUS SEPARATUR AMICUS | |
| 10. μὴ πιστεύσης τῷ ἐχθρῷ σου εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα | אַל תִּאֲמֵן בְּצַר לְעֵלֶם |
| NE CREDIDERIS INIMICO IN AETERNUM | |
| ὥς γὰρ ὁ χαλκὸς ἰοῦται οὕτως ἡ πονηρία αὐτοῦ | כִּי כְנֻשֶׁת תִּשְׁחִית רַעְתּוֹ |
| NAM SICUT AES CORRUMPIT PROXIMUM SUUM | |

11. καὶ ἂν ταπεινωθῇ καὶ πορεύηται συγκεκυφώς	אם יתענה ויהלך כפוף
ETIAM SI EXAUDITUR TIBI ET AMBULAT CORAM TE INCLINATUS	
ἐπίστησον τὴν ψυχὴν σου καὶ φύλαξαι ἀπ' αὐτοῦ	שים לב להשמר מִמֶּנּוּ
DA COR TUUM AD TIMENDUM EUM	
καὶ ἔσθῃ αὐτῷ ὡς ἐκμεμαχώς ἔσοπτρον	ותהיה לו כפֿונֿלה
ESTO ILLI TAMQUAM REVELANS SECRETUM	
καὶ γνώσῃ ὅτι οὐκ εἰς τέλος κατίωσε	וידע כי לא כלה השחת
NEQUE POTERIT TE CORRUMPERE ET SCIES FINEM ODI EIUS	

TRANSLATION.

'A friend is never to seek in prosperity, and an enemy is not hidden in adversity. In a man's prosperity his enemies diminish in number; in his adversity it is the friend who severs himself. Trust not thine enemy ever, for his friendship corrodes like brass; if he humble himself and walk submissively, take care and beware of him. And thou shalt be to him like the polisher, and know that he has not ceased corroding.'

NOTES.

8 a. ἐκδικεῖν stands for דָּרַשׁ in Deut. xviii. 19; the reading of MSS. 106 and 253 and some versions, οὐκ ἐπιγινωσθήσεται, represents another version of the same word, which the Syrian translator has interpreted from his own language, in which ܕܘܥܝܬ means 'docuit,' 'instituit.' The reading of MSS. 155 and 248 ἐκβληθήσεται stands for a v. ܝܢܪܝܫ. Compare iv. 12, xxxix. 3.

8 b. The Greek ἐχθρός and the Syr. ܡܠܝܢ stand regularly in Ben-Sira for the Heb. ܥָר; this is shown by some remarkable errors, e.g. xxxvii. 3 ܕܡܡܢܗ ܡܠܝܢܗ, Syr. INIMICUS ET MALUS, Heb. ܥָר ܥָר read ܥָר ܥָר. On the other hand φίλος, ὁ πλεσιόν, ἑταῖρος in the Gr., and ܡܝܬܪܝܢ, ܡܝܬܪܝܢ stand in different places for ܥָר; xiii. 21 ὑπὸ φίλων, Syr. DE MALO AD MALUM, Heb. ܡܪܥܝܡ; xxxvii. 4 ἑταῖρος φίλου MALUS AMICUS, where the first is therefore ܥָר; xix. 17 τὸν πλεσιόν σου MALUM for ܥָר; xxv. 9 φρόνησιν ܡܠܝܢ = ܥָר (in its less usual sense of 'thought'). A very curious case is xxxiv. 10 (Gr.) καὶ ποιῆσαι κατὰ καὶ οὐκ ἐποίησε, Heb. להרע ולא הרע, Syr. ET MALE FACERE AMICO NEQUE MALE FECIT, where clearly להרע is translated twice over.

It seems to me that in this metre the *pathach gánúbbh* counts as an ordinary vowel.

9 a. ܡܢܝܢ 'diminish in number' (Syriac sense). I suppose the Gr. and Syr. to have wrongly read ܡܢܝܢ; the correction seems required (י) by the antithesis,

which is wholly lost in the versions, a very flat sentiment being substituted; (2) by the word-play, which in clause *b* is very evident. As the assumption that our instruments are strong enough to restore words mistaken by *both* translators may seem hazardous, I will endeavour to point out cases which are clearer than this.

(i) xxviii. 3 ἀνθρώπος ἀνθρώπων συντηρεῖ ὀργήν, καὶ παρὰ κυρίου ζητεῖ ἰασιν. Syr. similarly. Now we do not all require *healing*, nor is it healing which, since we refuse it to our neighbours, we cannot claim for ourselves; we all require *mercy* or *pardon*, and it is this with which the text deals. The Hebrew, therefore, מְרַפֵּא אֲדָם לְאָדָם נִמְרָה וּמִן יְהוָה שְׂאֵל מְרַפֵּא should rather have been rendered καὶ παρὰ κυρίου ζητεῖ ἐπιείκειαν, and *asks God for mercy*. The same mistake is committed by the Latin translator in xxxvi. 25 *ei est lingua curationis, [est] et mitigationis et misericordiae*, where *mitigatio* and *curatio* are, it would seem, two renderings of מְרַפֵּא. The same mistake has perhaps occurred in i. 18 ὑγίειαν ἰάσεως = חַיִּים וּמְרַפֵּא, which should have been rendered *life and ease*. The Syrian is here again in error.

(ii) xiv. 2 μακάριος οὗ οὐ κατέγνω ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὃς οὐκ ἔπεσεν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλπίδος αὐτοῦ; Syr. BEATUS VIR QUEM ANIMA SUA NON CONTEMPSIT, ET CUIUS OMNES ACTIONES (מַשְׁכָּחִים; read perhaps מַשְׁכָּחִים) NON IRRITAE SUNT; Heb. אֲשֶׁרִי שְׁלָא מַשְׁכָּחִים מַאֲסָה נַפְשׁוֹ וְשְׁלָא נָפַל מִשְׁכָּרְיוֹ (Syr. reading שְׁכָרְיוֹ; but the phrase restored is better, see Payne-Smith s.v. מַשְׁכָּחִים). The antithesis in the translation is weak, or rather does not exist; we should therefore interpret מַאֲסָה from the New-Hebrew מַאֲסָה = מַסָּה 'to languish,' *blessed is he whose soul does not languish, and who is not disappointed in his hopes*. This was probably the sense of the Lat. *beatus qui non habuit* (tabuit?) *animi sui tristitiam* (tristitiā?).

(iii) xxx. 7 περιψύχων υἱὸν καταδεσμεύσει τραύματα αὐτοῦ 'he that spoils (Theocr. xiii. 54 with the notes of Ziegler and Fritzsche) his son binds his wounds,' which we need not prove to be mistranslated. Syr. 'his stripes will be many,' not much better. 'Will be many' stands for יַעֲצֵב, hence the hemistich is to be restored חֲבִירוֹתָיו בֶּן יַעֲצֵב מְפַיֵּק, and to be pointed חֲבִירוֹתָיו בֶּן יַעֲצֵב *he that spoils his son vexes his family*, a sentiment of indubitable truth. It is very noticeable that יַעֲצֵב has in New-Hebrew (Syriac) the sense 'to bind,' and in Old-Hebrew the sense 'to vex,' whereas חֲבִירוֹת is a New-Hebrew word. The translator has therefore interpreted each word from the wrong dialect.

(iv) vi. 20 μὴ θαυμάσης ἐν ἔργοις ἀμαρτωλοῦ, Syr. similarly. Now there is no harm in *marvelling* at any strange phenomenon, what we are often cautioned against is *being indignant*. Θαυμάζειν in Ben-Sira seems to represent תָּהָר; the clause is therefore to be restored *אל תתהר במעשי רשעים*, and to be emended

אל תתחר 'be not provoked by,' or 'do not emulate.' A precisely parallel passage is in Ps. xxxvii. 1.—These examples, if they do not render the above restoration probable, or even plausible, will at least show that it is in accordance with a regular method.

10 *b*. 'To rust' in Syriac is ܐܬܬܚܝܬ; if we assume the same form השחית to have been used by Ben-Sira, the Syriac translation 'corrupts' in this verse and in 11 *d* is at once explained, while in xxix. 13 καὶ μὴ ἰωθήτω and its gloss εἰς ἀπώλειαν also are satisfactorily solved, the Syriac rendering there, 'place it not,' representing תשיח for השחית. Ποιηρία αὐτοῦ may represent רעו or רעתו; the Syr. ܪܥܝܐ is in favour of the former, and in this case ܐ of כנהשת must be pronounced with a sounding sh'wa; the meaning will be that the clear light of his enmity becomes concealed like corroding brass. As, however, this figure is a strange one, it will be better to read רעתו, i. e. רַעְתּוֹ his 'friendship' (supposing the Syr. reading to be רעתו); the 'corroding' of his friendship is a figure familiar to us from Horace's 'aerugo mera;' compare the phrase δμιλίας κα-τοπτρον in Aeschylus, and especially κακοῦ δὲ χαλκοῦ δίκην τρίβῳ τε καὶ προσβολαῖς μελαμπαγῆς πέλει.

11 *a*. יְהַעֲפֶה rightily taken by the Greek as reflexive of עָפָה 'to humble,' wrongly by the Syrian as passive of עָנָה 'to hear.' Compare iii. 5.

כפוף seems imitated (and happily) in the Greek συγκεκυφώς.

11 *c*. ὡς ἐκμεμαχώς ἔσοπτρον: I fancy that ἔσοπτρον and ܐܬܬܬܚܝܬ of Syr. are both glosses explaining the difficult word מַגְלָה; properly an Arabic word, signifying 'to polish,' especially of a looking-glass; so Shahrastânî, p. 233. 10 كما يتمل في المرأة المجلوة. The ordinary New-Hebrew for this would have been מִרְקָה, as in Syriac (St. Ephraem, ii. 340 *a*; Aboth, p. 68 *b*). The context, however, shows that the Greek translator rendered it rightily.

11 *d*. The Syriac represents two attempts; reading first ה' לא יכל ה' for לא כלה ה'; and in the second pointing כִּלָּה.

SPECIMEN II. CHAP. XVI. 17, ETC.

17. μὴ εἴπῃς ὅτι ἀπὸ κυρίου κρυβήσομαι

NE DIXERIS A FACIE DEI ABSCONDAR

καὶ ἐξ ὧν τὶς μου μετησθήσεται;

ET IN ALTITUDINE CAELI QUIS MEMINERIT MEI

ἐν λαῷ πλείονι οὐ μὴ γνωσθῶ

ET IN POPULO MAGNO NON AGNOSCAR

אל תאמר כי מִפְּנֵי אֱפְסִיחַ

וּמִפְּרוֹם מִי יִזְכְּרֵנִי

בְּעַם הַרְבֵּה לֹא יֵדְעַ

- τίς γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν ἀμετρήτῳ κρίσει ;
 AUT QUIS EST ANIMA MEA INTER SPIRITUS OMNIUM HOMINUM
 18. ἰδοὺ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἄβυσσος
 ECCE CAELI ET CAELI CAELORUM ET ABYSSUS
 καὶ γῆ σαλευθήσονται ἐν τῇ ἐπισκοπῇ αὐτοῦ
 ET TERRA CUM SUPER EOS APPARET, STANT
 19. ἅμα τὰ ὄρη καὶ τὰ θεμέλια τῆς γῆς
 RADICES MONTIUM ET FUNDAMENTA MUNDI
 ἐν τῷ ἐπιβλέψαι ἐς αὐτὰ τρόμφ συσσεύονται
 DUM VIDETUR SUPER ILLA, COMMOVENTUR
 20. καὶ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς οὐ διανοηθήσεται καρδία
 ETIAM EGO NON PONAM IN CORDE
 καὶ τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ τίς ἐνθυμηθήσεται
 ET VIAS MEAS QUIS DISCERNET
 21. καὶ καταγίς ἦν οὐκ ὄψεται ἄνθρωπος
 SI PECCAVERO, NON VIDEBIT ME OCVLUS
 τὰ δὲ πλείονα τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀποκρύφους
 SIVE PRAEVARICATUS FUERO IN OMNI LOCO ABSCONDITO, QUIS SCIET
 22. ἔργα δικαιοσύνης τίς ἀναγγελεῖ ;
 ἢ τίς ὑπομενεῖ ; μακρὰν γὰρ ἡ διαθήκη
 23. ἐλαττούμενος καρδία διανοεῖται ταῦτα
 DEFICIENTES CORDE LOQUENTUR HAEC
 καὶ ἀνὴρ ἄφρων καὶ πλανώμενος διανοεῖται μωρά
 ET VIR IMPROBUS COGITAT SIC

מִי נַפְשִׁי בְּרוּחַת הַבְּרִיאָה

הֵן שָׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם וְשָׁמַיִם תְּהוֹם

וְאָרֶץ בְּפָקֶדוֹ יִמְעָדוּ

יַחַד הָרִים וְיִסְדּוֹת תִּבְלָה

כִּי יִבֵּט עֲלֵיהֶם יוֹעֵז

וְאֵתִי לֹא יֵשִׁים עַל לִבִּי

וְאֵת אֶרְצִיתִי מִי יִשְׁתַּחֲבֵּל

וְסִעָרְתִּי לֹא יִרְאֶה אִישׁוֹן

וְיִתֵּר מִעֲלָלִי בְּמִסְתָּר

מִעֲשֵׂי צְדָקָה מִי יִסְפֵּר

מִי יִסְבֵּר כִּי רְחוֹק הַנֶּזֶר

חֲסִרִי לֵב וְאִמְרוּ אֵלֶּה

וְאִישׁ שֹׁמֵה יִתְשֹׁב שְׂמוֹת

TRANSLATION.

Say not : *I shall hide from God, and who shall remember me from above ?*
I shall not be known among the multitude ; what is my soul in the wide creation ?
Lo the heavens, the heavens above the heavens, the deep, and the earth shake when He
visits them ; so too the mountains and the foundations of the world, when He looks
upon them, tremble. He will not then take notice of me, nor will He observe my ways.
No eye beholds my actions, nor spies into my doings in the dark. Who will take
count of acts of righteousness, or promise that the day of death is far off ? The un-
 reasoning speak so, and the fool thinks such folly.

NOTES.

17 c. רֹחַ and רְחֹחַ mean 'width,' 'spaciousness.' בְּרוּחַת was the Syrian pointing.

18 b. יַעֲמְדוּ was read by the Syrian יַעֲמְדוּ.

19 a. יַחַד was read by the Syrian יַסַּד.

20. In what follows the Syr. gives the first personal suffix, the Gr. the third ; it will be seen from the argument that the Syr. is right.

21 a. סַעַר in Syriac means 'to act,' *πράττειν* ; no word could correspond better with מַעֲלִיל of the next line. The Gr. thought of the Old-Heb. סַעַר 'a whirlwind,' *καταιγίς*. The error was natural, the Syr. kept clear of it owing to his having correct suffixes. He seems to have interpreted the word by מַעֲל in *δ*, or else to have thought of סַרַח.

אִישׁוֹן 'pupil,' read by Gr. as אִישׁוֹן 'men'? Or were עֵין and אִדָּם different readings? The same variation occurs in xxxvi. 23.

δ. וַיִּתֵּר was the Gr. reading for וַיִּתֵּר. It is difficult to decide between them.

מַעֲלִיל read by the Syr. מַעֲלִיל, a synonym in Old-Heb. of בָּנָה. Another case in which one of two ל has dropped out is in xxix. 4 πολλοὶ ὡς εὖρεμα ἐνόμισαν *dános*, Syr. MULTI POPOSCERUNT MUTUUM, Heb. רַבִּים הִשְׁתַּלְלוּ שְׂאֵלָה, read by Syr. הִשְׁתַּלְלוּ for הִשְׁתַּלְלוּ.

22. This verse is lost in Syr., perhaps owing to the number of lines ending with ר. יַסְבֵּר was read by Gr. as יַסְבֵּר or יַסְבֵּר. The play seems to render the restoration probable.

23 *δ*. *πλανώμενος καὶ ἄφρων* are tentative renderings of שָׁטָה, pointed also שָׁטָה. The rendering of MS. 106 *διεστραμμένος* is another suggestion for שָׁטָה 'diverted from the right,' 'perverse.' Compare xxxv. 17 (Gr.) *ἐκκλίνει ἐλεγμόν*, Syr. CELAT DOCTRINAM for מִשְׁטָה and מִשְׁטָה (so Syr.). A precisely similar case to ours is xxxv. 18 *ἀλλότριος καὶ ὑπερήφανος*, Syr. IMPROBUS, i. e. זָר with v. l. זָר.

שָׁטָה is pointed by Gr. שָׁטָה. The sense of many places is similarly distorted by טִבִּית 'grace' being read טִבִּית, and rendered ἀγαθά. See one example in xii. 3 οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγαθὰ τῷ ἐνδεδελχίζοντι εἰς κακὰ καὶ τῷ ἐλεημοσύνην μὴ χαριζομένῳ, Syr. NULLA EST GRATIA EI QUI HONORAT MALUM, SED QUI IUSTO FACIT NON PERDIT, Heb. אֵין מִתְחַפֵּר לְצַדִּיק לְאִיגָנָו לְרַשָּׁע לְמַנְדִּיל לְטִבִּית 'there is no grace to him who is liberal to the wicked, but stingy to the righteous.' Corruptions of Gr. מַנְדִּיל, טִבִּית, צָדִק, מַנְדִּיל, of Syr. לְמַנְדִּיל and מִתְחַפֵּר.

And now I will trouble you as little as possible with Hebrew, and endeavour to show what I believe to be the results of these observations. The critical art possesses no more valuable instrument than *metre* ;

if we examine the triumphs which the critical art has won, we shall find that metre has been in most cases its weapon. The greatest achievement in this line which any English scholar ever accomplished, the restoration of the Digamma to Homer, was only possible to Bentley, because Homer wrote in metre. The great Grecian, whose recent death closes the most brilliant period of Greek scholarship in this century, Prof. Cobet, of Leyden, was enabled, according to his distinguished pupil, Dr. Rutherford, to restore the Attic dialect to its original beauty and exquisiteness, chiefly because one writer of Attic employed metre. The proof therefore, if it can be satisfactorily given, that Ben-Sira's proverbs were in metre, will provide them with a measure, a *masora*, nearly as good as the *masora* of the canonical writings, because it will be the *masora* with which their author provided them himself.

Where the Syriac version exists, its errors might enable us to a certain extent to dispense with this aid; in the illustrations offered above, the words were mainly restored from a comparison of the versions, the metrical canon merely helping the order, and giving welcome confirmation to the restoration. There remain, however, many verses in the Greek version, for which there is no Syriac preserved; just as there are not a few in the Syriac, to which no Greek corresponds; and a whole family of MSS., of which the fullest is that employed for the Complutensian edition, contain additions which the editors speak lightly of as interpolations, although the uncouth idioms and unintelligible expressions which they exhibit might have suggested that they are the work of no ordinary interpolator. Really they are *all* renderings of Hebrew verses; rendered, however, so ignorantly that a person who had learned Hebrew only a little while ought to be able to restore them moderately well, while now the application of the metrical canon will tell us almost exactly what Ben-Sira wrote. MS. 248 preserves at xviii. 29 a verse which it says is on the subject of 'life,' *εἰς ζωὴν*; the maxim which Ben-Sira uttered on this important and overwhelming topic is the following: *κρείσσω παρησία ἐν δεσποτῇ μόνω εἶπερ νεκρῷ καρδίᾳ νεκρῷ ἀντέχσθαι*, words which are surely unintelligible, and at any rate have nothing to do with 'life.' Put into Hebrew they give the following verse:—

טוב פֿרעש בְּחַיִּים לְבָדּוֹ * מְלִכִּי מֵת לְבִי מֵת תּוֹפֵשׁ

meaning 'a live flea by itself is better than a couple of dead lions;' words which have something to do with life, and form a witty exaggeration of the better known Salomonic adage¹. When Ben-Sira in a fine tetrameter says 'the days of a man's life, when many, are a hundred years,'

יְמֵי חַיֵּי אִישׁ כִּי רַבּוֹ מֵאֵת שָׁנָה

MS. 106 adds the observation, ἀλόγιστος δὲ ἑκάστου πᾶσις ἡ κοίμησις 'but the sleep of each is incalculable by all,' words out of which a meaning can only be evolved with difficulty. Turn them into Hebrew without alteration, they yield the corresponding tetrameter

וְאֵין מִסְפָּר אֶחָד לְכָל הַשְּׁנָתָא

¹ 1. Παρησία is merely a transliteration of פָּרְלֵשׁ; other remarkable cases of this method occur (see Woods in *Studia Biblica*, p. 22); I will notice one very curious one from chap. xxiii. 13 ἀπαυδυσίαν ἀσυρῇ μὴ συνεθίσσης τὸ στόμα σου (MSS. 55, 248 ἀπαυδυσίαν ὄρκου); Syr. 'teach not thy mouth folly.' Hebrew תְּרַגֵּל אֶת-פִּיךָ-אֶחָד (Buxtorf, Lex. Rabb.); and the verse 14 δ καὶ τὸ ἐθισμῶ σου. μωρανθῇς (Syr. 'and thou be despised in thy doctrine') stands for וְכָרַגְלִיךָ הִנָּה 'and thou utter an obscene word according to thy custom.' Both translators wrongly pointed תְּרַגֵּל, but gave the word a sense which in Old-Hebrew it could well bear. The Syr. 'folly' was got from the Old-Hebrew תְּרַגֵּל 'fool.' The Greek ἀσυρῇ, omitted by the Syr., stands for עשור (עשור), a word inserted out of habit by some one who thought תְּרַגֵּל, 'an instrument of ten strings,' was intended, usually called עשור, but sometimes נבל, and sometimes עשור separately. The Greek translator rightly read תְּרַגֵּל, and therefore interpreted עשור as best he could. The other Greek rendering, ὄρκου, seems to me to represent a conjecture, שבוט for עשור, of some one who thought that, if any numeral was intended, the numeral which meant 'oath' was the most probable. The same variation occurs in xxxvii. 13.

2. Ἐν δεσπότῃ stands for בארון; read בארון 'in a chest' or 'press;' but the marginal εἰς ζῶν represents a better reading בְּחַיִּים, which I have adopted.

3. That לב can represent לִבִּי is shown by another verse in Ben-Sira, v. 35 μὴ ἴσθι ὡς λέων ἐν οἴκῳ σου, אַל תְּהִיָּה בְּלֵב בְּבִיחָךְ, Syr. 'be not a dog,' קָלֵב.

4. The last words are to be rendered, 'which has got hold of a dead lion;' the order seems sufficiently excused by the repetition. תִּפְשֵׁת was read תִּפְשֵׁת, and, if I err not, supposed to be governed by ל of לבמה. Thus every letter of the original has its representation.

² The Aramaic form is restored for the sake of the metre. This is not gratuitous, for had there not been some difference of form between this word and the preceding חַיִּים, the translator could not have thought of שָׁנָה, 'sleep,' without going out of his way to err.

‘and all the years have not the same number,’ that is, owing to the uncertainties of the calendar, a man might fancy he had lived a hundred years, but when he reduced these to days, find that he had lived considerably less—unless indeed the words have a deeper meaning. The same MS. in xxii. 23 has a verse οὐ περιφρονητέον γὰρ αἰὲ τῆς περιγραφῆς· οὐδὲ θανμάσιος πλούσιος νοῦν οὐκ ἔχων. The second clause is clear enough, ‘nor should a brainless man that is rich be admired;’ and the rule of the antithesis shows that the first clause, ‘one must not always despise the circumference,’ must have meant something analogous. In New-Hebrew these words will be לֹא לְבָכַר לְעֵלָם מְחֹזֵר; which are simply ignorantly pointed instead of לֹא לְבָכַר לְעֵלָם מְחֹזֵר ‘one must not despise a learned man who is a beggar,’ and the metre confirms this sense which the antithesis requires. The sentiment is the same as that of x. 22.

The instruments then to be employed in the reconstruction of Ben-Sira’s verses are the errors of the primary versions, and the metrical canon by which the result will be tested. One other resource—which, however, can only occasionally be employed—consists in the plays on words in which Oriental poets delight. Those who have looked at Avicenna’s introduction to his paraphrase of Aristotle’s Poetics will have observed that he regards these *lusus verborum* as an important element in the poetic art, and is accordingly at some pains to classify and divide them. The probability that any opportunity for a play upon words will have been seized by the poet will guide us sometimes to select a particular word out of synonyms for which the Greek has no regular representation. In the verse last quoted, οὐ δίκαιον ἀτιμάσαι πτωχὸν συνετόν, καὶ οὐ καθήκει δοξάσαι πλούσιον (Lat.) ἀμαρτωλόν, ‘it is not meet to despise a poor man who is prudent, nor to glorify a rich man who is wicked,’ the last two words have regular representatives, and the hemistich, when compared with the Syriac, may be restored with certainty as

וְלֹא לְבָכַר עֲשֵׂר רִשָּׁע

where the *lusus* consists in the fact that עֲשֵׂר and רִשָּׁע are written with the same letters in inverted order. The words ‘poor’ and ‘prudent,’

however, have no uniform equivalents, and here the probability of a similar play guides us to restore

לֹא לְהִקָּל אֶבְיוֹן נָבוֹן

(trimeter procatalectic).—There are, however, places where the play is rather more elaborate, and is quite concealed in both versions. In chap. xxii. 2 it is said that the fool is like dirt in the streets, ‘whoever picks him up will shake his hand,’ where the Syriac has ‘whoever sees him.’ ‘Whoever picks him up’ is clearly the more correct of these readings; but we should have expected ‘will *wipe* his hand,’ and this was probably the meaning of the original

כָּל-הַנִּטָּל לוֹ יִטֵּל יָדָיו

the New-Hebrew verb נָטַל meaning ‘to pick up,’ except when applied to the *hand*, when it means ‘to wash;’ the Rabbinic ‘washing of the hands,’ alluded to in the New Testament, being technically called נְטִילַת יָדַיִם. Both translators pointed יִטֵּל ‘will shake,’ or ‘fling.’ We might represent the hemistich in Latin by *quicumque levat cum lavat manus*. If it be objected that the Greek translator would not have rendered the same word rightly and wrongly in the same verse, no one acquainted with the LXX will assign much force to this objection.

There will be, I fancy, one more confirmation of my method, though it may seem a strange one. It is that there is likely to be a residue of verses which I shall be unable to solve. There is, e. g., a verse in the Greek (iii. 26), ‘he that loveth danger shall perish therein,’ to which there corresponds in the Syriac, ‘he that loveth good shall attain unto it,’ of which hitherto I have been unable to give any plausible account. I do not yet despair, being still very far from the end of my studies in Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic; and there are many other subjects which are nearly as necessary to the restorer of Ben-Sira. But if, when the work seems sufficiently matured to offer to the public, I find that there is a residue of unexplained texts, I shall not think that these prove the method is wrong, but, on the whole, indicate that it is right. If any one were to forge a play of Aristophanes, should he have ransacked all Greek literature for fragments, should he be so well-versed in the Attic dialect that no one could find him in error, should he have mas-

tered all the elaborate technicalities of the Attic theatre, but forget to compose some hopelessly corrupt passages, some proverbs and phrases of unknown origin, some words of obscure etymon, not found in the dictionary, his work would not pass for genuine a single month.—But although I expect to have not a few of those defeats which are as good as victories, yet I hope to be able to enrich the New-Hebrew vocabulary with many vocables from obvious sources, which, however, must not be drawn upon without a warrant. Some of these, with the grounds for believing them to have existed, have been given in the above selections. It is curious, but on the whole natural, that the Greek translator should show much greater familiarity with the New-Hebrew dialect than the Syrian translator shows. Now the vocabulary which will result from the restoration of Ben-Sira will be remarkable both in quantity and quality. In quantity, because his control over the vocabulary of the dialects will appear almost unlimited. For ‘light,’ e.g., he has not only the Old-Hebrew אור, but also the Chaldee נְהַר, confused by both translators with the Hebrew נָהָר ‘a river,’ and also with the New-Hebrew (Arabic) נְהוֹר ‘day;’ the following verses illustrate from every point of view both Ben-Sira’s poetical art and language, and his translators’ tentative helplessness (xxxvi. 7 Gr.)

לְמָה נְהוֹר מִנְהוֹר שָׁנָה
וְכָל-נְהַר שָׁנָה מְשֻׁמָּשׁ

‘Wherefore differs day from day, when all the light of the year is from the sun?’—I regard it as a safe canon that not only the innovations in language which Ben-Sira can be shown to have employed are to be restored to the New-Hebrew vocabulary, but also those words which the translators found in their copies, and assigned a meaning to, although they were not the words of Ben-Sira. There is a trimeter which can, I fancy, be restored with certainty, containing good advice; (iv. 30) ‘be not as a lion in thy house, nor *capricious* with thy servants;’ the Syrian renders the second clause ‘nor angry and terrible in thy works,’ showing by the double rendering that he is in some embarrassment. It seems to me that the antithesis requires the mention of some *wild beast*

in the second clause, to correspond with the *lion* in the first clause; the verse should perhaps be restored

לֹא כַדָּב בְּעַבְדֶּיךָ

‘Nor as a bear among thy servants;’ the Greek and the first rendering of the Syriac stand for כַּדָּב, a very familiar word in Arabic and New-Syriac, meaning ‘morose;’ while the second Syriac rendering is for a dittography כַּכָּב¹. I believe that all these must have been real words, existing either in literature or conversation, for the translators were not comparative philologists who could look out kindred roots in pentaglot lexicons, but must have relied on oral information.

What is more surprising, however, than the number of the vocables is the fact that Ben-Sira has a developed philosophical vocabulary, of which not even the beginnings exist in Old-Hebrew. In the remarkable account of man in chap. xvii, MS. 248 has some verses which are confirmed by the great authority of the Vetus Latina, but are wanting in most other MSS. and versions. Here we read that men were provided with ‘the five *ἐνεργήματα* of the Lord,’ rendered in the Latin *motus*, in

¹ That the supposition of dittographies in the Syriac may not seem strange, I will venture to quote a passage in which one very clearly occurs; using for once the form in which I hope my work may finally appear.

‘xviii. 30 *μη εὐφραίνου ἐπὶ πολλῇ τροφῇ*, S. itidem, sed plurali, Heb. אַל תִּשְׂמַח בָּרֶב תַּעֲנִיבִים *noli gaudere multo luxu*; *μηδὲ προσδεῖλῃς συμβολῇ αὐτῆς*, h.e. אַל תִּתְעַנֵּב וְאַל תִּתְעַנֵּב, S. paullo melius NEVE FIAS PAUPER BIS, h.e. אַל תִּתְעַנֵּב בְּרֶבֶב, scribe אַל תִּתְעַנֵּב *neve delectare deliciis*; 31 *μη γίνου πτωχὸς συμβολοκοπῶν ἐκ δανεισμοῦ*, h.e. אַל תִּתְעַנֵּב וְאַל תִּתְעַנֵּב, multo melius S. NOLI FIERI PAUPER ET EBRIUS ET CONTEMPTUS ET GLORIOSUS, h.e. אַל תִּתְעַנֵּב וְאַל תִּתְעַנֵּב, scribe אַל תִּתְעַנֵּב וְאַל תִּתְעַנֵּב *noli fieri pauper contemptusque et gloriosus*; *vides interpretem haesitare utrum ול an ול scribendum sit, parum perite. תִּתְעַנֵּב autem etiam in loco a codd. 106 et 248 servato (xxii. 6) Ben-Sirae vindicabimus; ibi enim τὴν τροφὴν ἔχοντα et γανυώμενα idem vocabulum videntur repraesentare; hoc autem תִּתְעַנֵּב potest esse, vix aliud. Καὶ οὐδὲν σοὶ ἐστὶν ἐν μαρσυνπείῳ*, S. itidem plane, Heb. אֵין לְךָ בְּיָמֶיךָ מְאוֹכָה, *dum nihil tibi est in oculis*. Adicit cod. 248 *ἔσθῃ γὰρ ἐπίβουλος τῆς ἰδίας ζωῆς, λαλητός*, h.e. אַל תִּתְעַנֵּב וְאַל תִּתְעַנֵּב (حاسد) *atque opprobrio erit inopia tua*. Tum quidem erit, si divitem agis; sin modeste vivis, honesta erit. Nullam personam iucundius derisere veteres quam *πτωχαλόνα*; vide librum v. d. Ottonis Ribbeck, cui titulum “Alazon” fecit.’

the A.V. 'operations,' and a seventh, speech, to interpret his 'operations.' That the five *ἐνεργήματα* are the five senses is clear; but how came they to be called 'operations'? In this way: the New-Hebrew for sense is *רְגִישָׁה*, a word properly signifying 'motion' or 'activity,' being derived from the Sanskrit *ragas*, the active member of the Indian philosophical trinity. This name must be applied to 'sense' in virtue of some philosophical theory, which we might very well seek in India. These verses are to my mind clearly genuine, for they are tetrameters, and the middle verse is padded to fill up the measure¹. But if they be interpolated, there is a verse of undoubted genuineness in which the word *עֲלָמִי* 'immortal' occurs, a word belonging to a similar region of ideas, and constructed after a similarly novel pattern. God, the author says (xvii. 30), does not expect too much of man, 'because the son of man is not immortal,' *עֲלָמִי*, a vocable rendered certain by the error of the Syriac, 'for his thoughts are not man's thoughts,' that is *עֲלָמִי*, from *עֵלֶם*, an Arabic word signifying 'knowledge,' but used like the similar *דַּעַת* in Hebrew to express 'intellect,'—a word, as we have already seen, well-known to Ben-Sira, and long ago discovered by Hitzig to be the name of wisdom referred to in the verse (vi. 22), 'Wisdom is like her name and is not manifest to many,' the meaning of this root in Old-Hebrew being 'to be hidden.' Any one who remembers the troublesome circumlocutions by which the idea 'immortal' is expressed in Old-Hebrew, will feel that the language has made some advance as a medium for accurate thinking.

The reconstruction of the verses of Ben-Sira, whether accomplished by me or by some abler Hebraist, will give us for Hebrew what has hitherto been wanting, a book of a certain date to serve as a sort of foundation-stone for the history of the language. Hitherto there has been no barrier in the way of criticism; compositions in classical Hebrew are placed by eminent scholars in the middle of the third century, and

¹ xvii. 6 *ἔκτρον δὲ νοῦν αὐτοῖς ἐδωρήσατο μερίζων*

וְשֵׁשִׁית הַבּוֹנָה לָהֶם כְּנָה כְּנִי

ἐδωρήσατο stands for *מינה*; *מינו* was saved from corruption by the loss of its *ה*. This certain clue to the original of *μερίζων* will be most helpful in other stray verses like these.

some in Middle-Hebrew are assigned to the second ; the argument from language being often neglected, when theological or anti-theological interests are concerned. Now to the Greek translation of Ecclesiasticus there is prefixed a preface in which the translator states his time, place, and relation to the author ; and that preface is written in so extraordinary a language that its genuineness can never be disputed. The latest possible date for the original of Ben-Sira's proverbs is known from that preface to be not much later than 200 B.C. The foundation-stone will therefore be situated not quite where we should have wished, but still it will serve our purpose. If by 200 B.C. the whole Rabbinic farrago with its terms and phrases and idioms and particles was developed, and was the classical language of Jerusalem, and the medium for prayer and philosophical and religious instruction and speculation, then between Ben-Sira and the books of the Old Testament there must lie centuries, nay, there must lie, in most cases, the deep waters of the Captivity, the grave of the Old-Hebrew and the old Israel, and the womb of the New-Hebrew and the new Israel. If Hebrew, like any other language, has a history, then Isaiah (first or second) must be separated from Ecclesiastes by a gulf ; but a yet greater gulf must yawn between Ecclesiastes and Ecclesiasticus ; for in the interval a whole dictionary has been invented, of philosophical terms, such as we traced above, of logical phrases like כָּל-שֶׁכֶּן 'a fortiori,' of legal expressions like הוֹצִיא 'to give a daughter in marriage,' יֵצֵא עֵשֶׂק 'to perform a duty,' theosophical expressions like בְּרִיאָה 'the creation,' תְּשׁוּבָה 'repentance ;' nor have the structure and grammar of the language experienced less serious alteration ; the sounding Hithpael form, almost sporadic in Old-Hebrew, now luxuriates ; the abstract forms פִּעִילָה and פִּעוּל have become familiar and trite ; fresh conjunctions have been invented to suit the now more complex sentence ; new uses of prepositions like עַל-כֵּי, 'because of,' in a trimeter (xiii. 24) rendered in our version 'riches are good unto him that hath no sin, and poverty is an evil in the mouth of the ungodly,' but of which the real meaning seems to have been 'riches are good, because they do not necessitate sin, and poverty is an evil, because it tempts men to transgress'¹ ;—a

¹ טוב עֵשֶׂר עַל שְׂמִיךְ בּוֹ חֵטְאָת וְרָעָה חֲסִידוֹת עַל-פִּי חֵטְא

sage maxim, which may have drifted to Ben-Sira from the great storehouse of the wisdom of antiquity, the Republic of Plato, although even in Semitic literature it is not difficult to parallel. It may be, if ever Ben-Sira is properly restored, if ever better scholars condescend to correct the errors which the first restorer's ignorance will engender, and to supply the deficiencies which his carelessness will leave, that, while some students are engaged in bringing down the date of every chapter in the Bible so late as to leave no room for prophecy and revelation, others will endeavour to find out how early the professedly post-exilian books can be put back, so as to account for the divergence between their awkward Middle-Hebrew, and the rich and eloquent New-Hebrew of Ben-Sira. However this may be, hypotheses which place any portion of the classical or Old-Hebrew scriptures between the Middle-Hebrew of Nehemiah and the New-Hebrew of Ben-Sira will surely require some reconsideration, or at least have to be harmonized in some way with the history of the language, before they can be unconditionally accepted. Ben-Sira will have performed excellent service besides, in showing that the Hebrew poets, like all others who have written what is worth reading, did not employ a dead and literary dialect, but their *own* language, spiced indeed with archaisms, but still their own.

The work of restoring Ben-Sira will then possess some interests besides those which are merely literary and critical—though these will be great; for it is a strange feeling after reading some pages in illustration of a peculiar saying or expression to find that that saying or expression never existed; as when, after studying what the commentators say of the verse (ix. 17), 'in the hand of craftsmen a work shall be praised,' one discovers that it meant 'by the wisdom of rulers a kingdom shall be established.' However, there will be other interests as well—one, that we shall have a dated document in a language nearer to the mother-tongue of Christianity, the language of Christ and His Apostles, than any extant; for it is not likely that the New-Hebrew made much progress between the time of Ben-Sira and that of Christ, although doubtless it made some. Perhaps, therefore, a deeper study of the New-Hebrew may here and there throw light on a saying in the Gospels, if Dr. Edersheim has here left us anything to glean. Few recognise, moreover, how deeply the thought of the Gospels is influenced by the proverbs of Ben-

Sira; I have hopes that the restoration may make this somewhat clearer. In Matthew v. 25 there is a maxim 'make peace with thine enemy quickly;' this is perhaps only a confirmation of Eccus. xviii. 20, which appears in the Greek as 'before judgment examine thyself,' but which the Syriac shows to have meant 'before judgment beg off,' הִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, of which the reflexive sense was misunderstood by the Greek translator. The maxim in vi. 7 'make no vain repetitions' is also from Ben-Sira, this time rightly rendered. I believe the book to have been a kind of *enchiridion Epicteti* in those early centuries, and well it would serve such a purpose. But, in the second place, the history of the Hebrew language, with its regular development certified by this its latest representative, may help us to return in some cases to some of the traditional dates of the Old Testament scriptures; to save, after Bâthgen and Kittel, yet a few more crumbs of the rich meal on which the ages have been nourished; like the man in Homer who preserves through the night some sparks of the fire which in the day-time blazed upon his hearth:

'Saving the seed of flame that he go not to others to kindle.'

Among the things regarded by Ben-Sira as better than treasures I do not find one thing, which should perhaps be among them—the prospect of a work which is likely to occupy some time, to bring many disappointments and some successes, and in the end to leave the subject not quite where it was before. Such a treasure I believe I have found in the task of restoring Ben-Sira; and it will be all the more grateful to me, because it will be associated with the names of several persons whose friendship I regard as the greatest privilege I have enjoyed. Now living persons must not be mentioned; but there is no harm in my naming one, who, to use the language of Seneca, *Quamvis ipse ereptus sit oculis, tamen 'multa viri virtus animo, multusque recursat gentis honos.'* Of all the adopted sons of Oxford there has been no one who more highly appreciated the honour of a position here than Dr. EDERS-HEIM; none who had done more to deserve it, or who did more honour to the University which adopted him. What a master of English style he was is recognised by all; I have known those who, after reading his 'Life and Times of the Messiah,' have found all other books lose their savour. How carefully he worked, how precise and accurate he was in

his preparations, how exhaustive in his study of all that concerned the subjects on which he wrote, was known only to those who were his collaborateurs, or who had opportunities of examining his posthumous papers and collections. May the noble monument to his memory which his widow has presented to Exeter College not lie idle, but attract many to work on the same lines, with like conscientiousness and like success.

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Ecclesiasticus

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